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## CHARCOAL DRAWING.

In learning to draw the simplest means are of course the best. For this reason, principally, charcoal is used in all the good art schools, being most available for studies where frequent erasure is necessary, and also because the most brilliant and striking effects are quickly and easily obtained by its use. Charcoal is a favorite material with artists generally, in sketching and drawing, being equally available for figures or landscapes where a quick, rough impression merely is desired, or for work to be carried on so as to produce the most finished effect.

The materials necessary for charcoal drawing are simply a box of the best French charcoal, either the Conté or the Rouget, which comes in short firm sticks; some sheets of charcoal paper, a few assorted paper stumps, a pointed rubber or leather stump, and a piece of soft and rather stale bread. In selecting the paper to be used, the "Lalanne" and the "Michelet" are among the best, and either can be easily procured in this country of any good dealer in art materials. In most art schools the cream white is preferred to the tinted shades of paper for making studies, though sometimes in rapid sketches good effects may be produced on tinted paper with white chalk introduced in the highest lights.

In preparing to draw, several sheets of paper should be carefully fastened with thumb-tacks to the drawing board, one over the other; this is to prevent any inequalities of the board from making an impression on the surface of the paper when rubbing. For sketching, a block of charcoal paper is very convenient, and can be made to order any size that is desired. This is composed of a number of small sheets of paper tightly pressed together, until they are solid and compact, forming a sort of tablet which can be held conveniently on the lap. When one sketch is made, that leaf may be carefully loosened from the top, leaving a clean sheet underneath for the next drawing.

There are two principal methods of drawing in charcoal: one when the stump is used throughout, and again when the shadows are put in simply by broad hatching, and the stump is not used at all. In this case, a slight tone is often rubbed in all over the surface of the shadow with the finger, and the hatching is put on afterward with the charcoal sharpened to a point. In landscapes the finger is used to rub in the charcoal, instead of the stump, by many artists, as it gives a different and looser effect, though the hatching is omitted. The point is, of course, used also. For instance, in beginning a landscape, just sketch in lightly the principal forms, dividing the whole as far as possible into two large masses of light and shade. With a stick of sharpened charcoal fill in the shadows with strong parallel lines rather close together. Now with the first finger gently rub these lines together until the whole is one flat tone. If the tone is too dark, rub a clean rag softly over the surface of the paper, removing the superfluous charcoal, and then go over it again with the point. The same process may be repeated until the desired depth of tone is gained. The deeper accents may then be put in with the charcoal point, and any necessary details drawn.

The most brilliant lights may be made in the darkest shadows, or any part completely erased, at will, by using stale soft bread crumb rolled up to a point in the fingers. Sometimes the pointed rubber stump is found convenient when bread is not at hand.

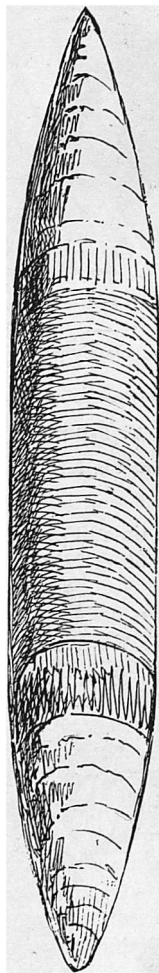
The masses of light in the landscape are treated by spreading in the same way a very delicate tint over the whole surface, and then removing the highest lights with bread. The accents and details are then put in with a point, as before explained. Sometimes a piece of chamois skin is preferred to a rag in removing superfluous charcoal.

In making large studies of heads, where careful finish is required, the stump is used. The charcoal is laid on in parallel lines as for landscapes, but should be rubbed with a large paper stump until the flat tone is attained. The smaller stumps are used in finishing small parts, and it is necessary to keep them as clean as possible, so as not to smear the drawing. Stumps when much blackened may be cleaned off with bread. In finishing, the charcoal is used cut to a fine point, for details, and sharp accents. Hatching sometimes is employed in the finishing of charcoal heads that are worked with the stump, but is not considered to be in good style, and is therefore avoided by the best artists. The process of working in charcoal is, on the whole, so very simple, that very few directions are necessary. After a few trials, practice and observation will enable the intelligent worker to improve rapidly and gain by experience a knowledge of the resources of this most interesting method of art work.

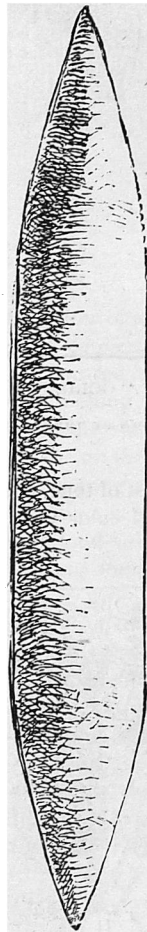
M. B. ODENHEIMER-FOWLER.

## HAMERTON ON CHARCOAL DRAWING.

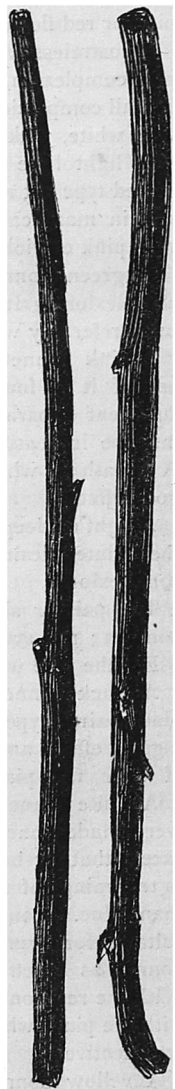
CHARCOAL DRAWING, as it is done at the present time, is a modern art. The old masters seldom used charcoal except for a slight sketch to be removed with



LEATHER STUMP.



PAPER STUMP.



TWIG CHARCOAL.

Charcoal drawings may be executed on paper or canvas, or even on the clean plaster of walls, and fixed there; but of all materials paper is the most used. The quality of its grain is of great importance, as it is sure to affect very strongly the quality of the manual work, and also the particular kind of natural truth which the artist will be able to interpret. If it is too rough it catches the charcoal too strongly on its little eminences, so that the artist finds it difficult, if not impossible, to get any delicate textures, and has to shade sky and water as if they were rock. If, on the other hand, the paper is too smooth (as Bristol-board, for example), the charcoal does not bite upon it properly—it seems to have no hold—and good shading is not easy. The best papers have a grain, but rather a fine grain, and very even in its particular kind of roughness, like some fine-grained stone. Some draughtsmen, in charcoal, headed by Lalanne and Lhermitte, have a liking for papier vergé—paper with a strongly visible wire-mark. In the process of manufacture the paper-pulp dries thinner where it meets the wire, which consequently leaves a small hollow like a furrow in earth. The charcoal passes over this furrow without getting into it, so that the furrow remains white, unless the charcoal is rubbed into it purposely. The consequence is that you have many straight white lines going across your drawing, and others going at right angles to them at measured intervals. Can this be any advantage? Allongé says no; he thinks that there is nothing in nature answering to these straight lines, which he looks upon as an intrusion and an interference, and he will not use paper in which they occur. On the other hand, Lalanne has a strong preference for this papier vergé.

An artist may do as he likes with charcoal or with anything else. He may, of course, take a piece of hard charcoal and draw in pure line with it, if he prefers line, or he may draw in line first, then fix it, and add auxiliary shade with a stump, answering the same purpose as a sepia wash on a line in indelible ink; or, again, he may begin by shading his subject and then mark organic lines upon it wherever he feels them to be necessary or useful to clear up his drawing and give it a decision and accent. All these methods are legitimate enough, but the true spirit or genius of charcoal drawing is in the interpretation of nature by pure shade with no assistance from line, and the use of charcoal in this sense is the best discipline that it affords to painters of all kinds as well as to etchers and engravers.

It has been found by experience that charcoal is one of the surest and most convenient means for shading spaces correctly. I do not intend to imply that the shades it gives will be more accurate than those in a water-color or oil monochrome, but they may be equally truthful, equally delicate, and they are superior in convenience and facility of application, and also of alteration.

I have said that the shades of charcoal may be as delicate and as truthful as those of water-color or oil monochromes. This requires just one little restriction or reserve. They are quite as delicate, and they are not less truthful in all parts of the scale except the very lowest, but charcoal cannot get quite so low down in the bass notes as some other kinds of drawing. Its most intense blacks are not so dark as those which may be easily obtained in black chalk, or in sepia.

Charcoal, by its want of intense blackness, does not go to the lowest notes of chalk, and, therefore, to give it as large a scale as possible, it is desirable that it should be on paper either perfectly white or very nearly so. Pure white papers are cold, but this is remedied

COMMON CHARCOAL.